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In Recognition of Goliad, Texas and Cinco De Mayo

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the upcoming 153rd anniversary of Cinco de Mayo. In May I will join my constituents in Goliad, Texas, to celebrate Cinco de Mayo. The holiday has come to represent a day of celebration of Mexican culture around the world.

Goliad, Texas is the birthplace of the young Mexican general, and the hero of Cinco de Mayo - Ignacio Seguin Zaragoza. He initially studied for priesthood, yet took up arms in defense of his country when Mexico slid into the War of the Reform. As the conflict came to a close in the late 1850s, General Zaragoza joined federalist troops with the legendary Benito Juarez and fought in numerous battles, including the Battle of Calpulalpan, which ended the War of the Reform. His strategic acumen in those four years led to his rapid promotion to general.

After the war, Mexico's European debt suffocated the economy, forcing then Mexican President Benito Juarez to declare a moratorium on debt payments. In retaliation, Spain, England, and France sent their fleets and forced the surrender of Veracruz, Mexico. President Juarez sent one of his generals to Veracruz in response. When that general observed the forces of the great European powers displayed in front of Veracruz, he

resigned. President Juarez turned to General Zaragoza to lead the fight.

The Spanish and English withdrew their forces after negotiations with President Juarez, but the French army, arguably the best during that time, marched on to Mexico City. The intent was to conquer Mexico, join forces with the Confederate Army, and attack the Union. However, General Zaragoza stopped this invasion, in Pueblo, Mexico.

The Battle of Puebla lasted most of May 5, 1862. Despite a severe imbalance in forces, the Mexican army held. General Zaragoza was lauded on his return. Later, while visiting his own sick troops, he contracted typhoid fever and died on September 8, 1862, at the young age of 33. He was honored with a state funeral, and three days later, President Benito Juarez declared May 5, or Cinco de Mayo, a national holiday.

Citizens of Goliad maintain a rich cultural heritage, and are fiercely proud of their legacy. Today, festivities center around Zaragoza Plaza, which is located adjacent to the birthplace of Ignacio Seguin Zaragoza. The Texas Legislature has designated this beautiful plaza as the official celebration site for Cinco de Mayo so that future generations may understand its historical significance.